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GOVERNANCE AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS FOR FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION IN ETHIOPIA: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Transforming food systems toward sustainability, resilience, and equity has become a global priority, particularly in low- and middle-income countries where governance constraints continue to undermine food security and nutrition outcomes. In Ethiopia, agriculture remains central to livelihoods, employment, and economic growth, yet the effectiveness, coherence, and inclusiveness of the governance and policy frameworks that shape food system transformation are not well understood. This systematic review aimed to synthesize recent evidence on governance structures, policy coherence, multisectoral coordination, and implementation dynamics influencing Ethiopia's food system transformation between 2020 and 2025. The review followed PRISMA 2020 guidelines to ensure methodological rigor and transparency. A comprehensive search was conducted across Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, AGRIS, AGORA, and selected grey literature sources, yielding 1,500 records. After removing duplicates and applying inclusion criteria, 134 studies were retained for analysis. The review drew on both peer-reviewed academic studies and policy and institutional reports. Data were extracted using a standardized template that captured bibliographic details, study setting, methodological design, governance constructs, policy domains, institutional actors, financing and implementation arrangements, and key findings. Because the evidence base was heterogeneous and largely qualitative, the analysis proceeded through thematic synthesis supported by qualitative coding software. Codes were developed inductively and organized into recurring domains, including coordination, policy coherence, participation, accountability, sub-national capacity, and climate-related governance. Findings reveal that Ethiopia has established an extensive, multi-layered governance architecture comprising more than 15 ministries, inter-ministerial platforms, and multisectoral coordination mechanisms. Despite this institutional progress, food system transformation remains constrained by persistent policy fragmentation, weak operational coordination, and limited alignment between national strategies and sub-national implementation. Capacity gaps at regional and local levels, particularly in human resources, financing, infrastructure, and monitoring systems, significantly hinder effective policy execution. Decision-making processes are also centralized and insufficiently inclusive, limiting meaningful participation of smallholder farmers, women, youth, and civil society actors. While progressive policies and strategies exist, their implementation remains inconsistent, and empirical evidence linking governance arrangements to household-level food security, nutrition, and resilience outcomes is limited. Overall, governance functionality, rather than policy availability, emerges as the primary constraint to food system transformation in Ethiopia. Strengthening policy coherence across sectors, institutionalizing multisectoral coordination through aligned mandates and budgeting processes, enhancing sub-national implementation capacity, and embedding inclusive and participatory governance mechanisms are identified as critical leverage points to support a more integrated, equitable, and climate-resilient transformation of Ethiopia's food system.

Key words: Food systems, Governance, Policy coherence, Multisectoral coordination, Resilience, Ethiopia

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INTRODUCTION

Food systems are increasingly understood as complex and interconnected arrangements that extend beyond agricultural production to encompass processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management within broader ecological, political, social, and economic contexts [1, 2]. Global debates highlight that transforming food systems to become sustainable, resilient, and equitable requires governance frameworks capable of coordinating diverse actors, aligning policies across sectors, and mediating power relations that shape access to resources, participation, and decision-making [3, 4]. Governance, therefore, plays a central role in determining food system outcomes through processes of policy formulation, institutional coordination, and implementation across multiple administrative levels [1, 5]. In many low- and middle-income countries, including Ethiopia, governance arrangements remain highly sectoral, with agricultural, nutrition, health, environmental, and social protection systems often operating in isolation. These sector-specific approaches prioritize short-term productivity and economic growth at the expense of nutrition, environmental stewardship, social equity, and long-term sustainability [6, 7]. As a result, food system interventions frequently fall short of producing transformative outcomes, with persistent food insecurity, malnutrition, and vulnerability to climate-related shocks among rural households [8, 9]. In response to these continuing challenges, the government has introduced a series of strategies and policies over the past decade to enhance food security, improve nutrition, strengthen climate resilience, and promote sustainable agricultural transformation [10]. Despite these efforts, evidence indicates that progress toward integrated, equitable, and climate-resilient food system transformation remains uneven. Growing scholarship highlights several governance-related constraints that continue to hinder Ethiopia's food system transformation. These include fragmented institutional arrangements; limited policy coherence across sectors; weak operational coordination at the implementation level; and persistent capacity challenges at the regional and local levels. Moreover, decision-making processes remain highly centralized, limiting meaningful participation by smallholder farmers, women, youth, and civil society organizations [11, 12]. Power asymmetries, such as differences in political authority, financial resources, institutional position, or social status, determine which actors' voices carry weight in policy debates and which groups are marginalized. As a result, the priorities of ministries, donors, and elites often dominate, while those of smallholder farmers, women, youth, and civil society actors are overlooked, with implications for the relevance, equity, and sustainability of policy outcomes. Although international literature on food system governance has expanded rapidly worldwide, empirical evidence linking governance quality to household-level food security, nutrition outcomes, and resilience in Ethiopia remains limited [13]. The lack of synthesized evidence creates a critical gap, particularly at a

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time when Ethiopia has committed to transforming its food system through the United Nations Food Systems Summit. A comprehensive and analytically grounded understanding of governance structures, coordination arrangements, policy coherence, and participation dynamics is essential for identifying the pathways and bottlenecks shaping food system transformation. This systematic review synthesizes evidence published between 2020 and 2025 on governance and policy frameworks that influence Ethiopia's food system transformation. It examines institutional coordination, policy coherence, multi-sectoral governance, sub-national implementation capacity, power and participation dynamics, and implications for household food system outcomes. By bringing together recent empirical studies, policy reports, and grey literature, the review provides an integrated analysis of the governance challenges and opportunities shaping Ethiopia's transition toward a sustainable, resilient, and equitable food system.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This review of governance structures, policy coherence, multisectoral coordination, and implementation dynamics influencing Ethiopia's food system transformation between 2020 and 2025 followed a systematic literature review design structured according to the PRISMA 2020 reporting standard to maximize transparency and reproducibility [14]. The protocol established a priori the research questions, eligibility criteria, information sources, search strings, screening procedures, quality appraisal tools, and synthesis plan. Although the protocol was not prospectively registered, it is available from the authors upon request to ensure full methodological disclosure. The overarching objective was to examine how governance and policy frameworks have influenced food system transformation in Ethiopia during 2020–2025, with specific attention to institutional coordination, policy coherence, participation and power, sub-national implementation capacity, and implications for household-level food security and nutrition. Eligibility criteria were defined to capture conceptual and empirical work at the nexus of governance and food systems. Included items were peer-reviewed articles and credible grey literature that analyzed governance structures, policy frameworks, or institutional arrangements relevant to food systems; addressed at least one transformation dimension (sustainability, resilience, equity, or nutrition); focused on Ethiopia or drew explicitly comparable lessons from African contexts; and were published in English between January 1, 2020, and December 31, 2025. Exclusion criteria removed studies centred exclusively on agronomic techniques or nutrition science without governance relevance, editorials and opinion pieces lacking substantive evidence, and records without accessible full texts. Information sources comprised multidisciplinary bibliographic databases and institutional repositories to reduce source bias. Search was run on Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, AGRIS, and AGORA to capture

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peer-reviewed literature across the social, health, agricultural, and environmental sciences. To mitigate publication bias and retrieve policy-relevant evidence, targeted searches of grey literature were conducted across FAO, IFPRI and WFP portals, as well as Ethiopian government sites, including the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Health, the Ethiopian Public Health Institute, the Ministry of Finance, and the Agricultural Transformation Institute. The first 200 results were retrieved from Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, AGORA, Google Scholar, and Ethiopian national policy databases. This cap was applied only to bibliographic databases to ensure breadth while maintaining feasibility. By contrast, FAO, IFPRI, WFP, and Ethiopian government ministry websites were exhaustively searched without applying a numerical limit, so that all available relevant documents could be considered. This distinction ensured that academic sources were systematically sampled while institutional and policy sources were comprehensively reviewed. The search strategy operationalized a concept-combination approach. Core strings combined food system terms ("food system" OR "agri-food system" OR "food systems"), governance terms ("governance" OR "policy" OR "policy framework" OR "multi-sectoral" OR "coordination"), Ethiopian geography ("Ethiopia"), and process terms ("transformation" OR "resilience" OR "equity" OR "nutrition-sensitive"). Boolean operators and field codes were adapted to each database's syntax. No methodological filters were applied to avoid excluding relevant qualitative, quantitative or mixed-methods evidence. Date limits were set to 2020–2025 to reflect the surge of governance scholarship and reforms following the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit. Reference lists of all included items were hand-searched to identify additional sources, and backward citation chasing was performed where necessary. The review aimed to synthesize the global, regional, and national literature, focusing on governance structures, policy coherence, sustainability, resilience, and equity within the Ethiopian food system. Study selection proceeded in three stages. First, duplicate records were automatically removed and then manually verified. Second, titles and abstracts were screened against the eligibility criteria. Third, full texts were retrieved and assessed for inclusion. The initial search identified 1,500 records. After removing 400 duplicates, 1,100 unique records were screened at the title and abstract level. Reports were identified by retrieving 304 items; 10 could not be retrieved, leaving 294 full texts for eligibility assessment. Ultimately, 134 documents met the inclusion criteria, comprising 98 peer-reviewed studies and 36 policy and institutional reports. Reasons for exclusion at the full-text stage included insufficient governance focus, insufficient relevance to Ethiopia, and the absence of policy implications. In addition to the inclusion criteria, studies were excluded if they (i) focused exclusively on agronomic techniques or nutrition science without governance relevance, (ii) were editorials or opinion pieces lacking substantive evidence, (iii) did not address Ethiopia or provide explicitly comparable

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lessons from African contexts, or (iv) had no accessible full text. At the full-text stage, reasons for exclusion were recorded and categorized. The PRISMA flow diagram (Figure 1) reports the number of sources excluded at each stage, disaggregated by reason (insufficient governance focus, insufficient relevance to Ethiopia, absence of policy implications, or lack of accessible full text), to ensure transparency of the screening process. The overall flow adheres to PRISMA 2020 conventions (Figure 1). Data extraction used a standardized template, piloted on a subset of 5 studies, to ensure consistency and completeness. Extracted items included bibliographic details (author, year, source), study setting and scale, methodological design, governance constructs examined (example, coordination, coherence, participation, accountability), policy domains (agriculture, nutrition, health, environment, social protection, trade), institutional actors, financing and implementation arrangements, and key findings related to transformation outcomes and household-level effects. Extracted text segments relevant to the review questions were imported into NVivo to support coding and theme development [15]. Quality appraisal was tailored to the heterogeneity of sources. Peer-reviewed studies were assessed using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT), enabling comparable appraisal across qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods designs. Grey literature was evaluated using a checklist adapted from the AACODS framework [16] to assess authority, accuracy, coverage, objectivity, date, and significance. Appraisal outcomes informed sensitivity judgment during synthesis but were not used to exclude studies that otherwise met the eligibility criteria, given the importance of policy documents for understanding governance arrangements. Data synthesis followed a thematic approach appropriate for complex governance phenomena spanning multiple sectors and administrative levels. An initial deductive codebook reflected the review questions and conceptual categories derived from systems thinking and governance literature (policy coherence, multi-sectoral coordination, vertical integration, participation and power, sub-national capacity, monitoring and accountability, climate risk governance). This was complemented by inductive coding to accommodate emergent patterns and context-specific governance mechanisms. Codes were iteratively refined through constant comparison in NVivo, producing higher-order themes and sub-themes that captured convergent and divergent findings across sources [15]. Where available, quantitative indicators (for example, the number of ministries represented on platforms, budget alignment practices) were summarized narratively to triangulate qualitative insights. To enhance rigour, study selection and coding were conducted independently by two reviewers for an initial tranche of records, with disagreements resolved through discussion and, where needed, third-party arbitration. Inter-reviewer consistency was monitored qualitatively across subsequent batches to maintain stable code application. Reflexive memos documented analytical decisions, code merges and splits, and

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theme boundary adjustments, creating an audit trail from raw evidence to synthesized claims. Reporting followed PRISMA 2020 guidance. The Results section presents governance structures and coordination arrangements observed in Ethiopia, followed by cross-cutting themes on fragmentation, participation and power, sub-national capacity, and climate-resilient governance. The Discussion interprets these findings in relation to the wider African experience and draws implications for policy and practice, while the Limitations reflect on constraints related to language, time window, and heterogeneity. Although this study involved no human participants or primary data collection, ethical clearance for the broader research project was obtained from the University of South Africa Research Ethics Committee and the Ethiopian Public Health Association.

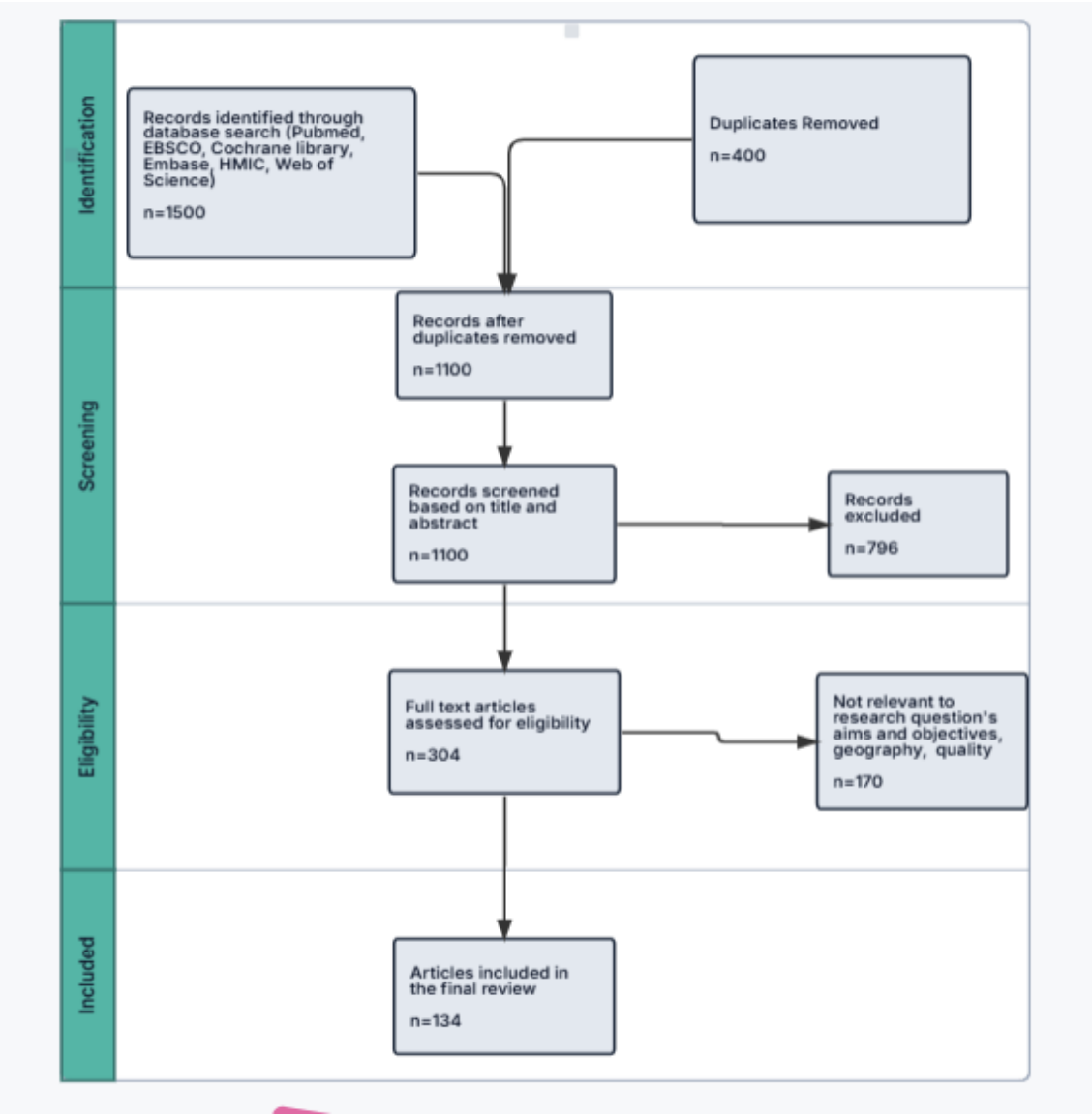


Figure 1: PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram Template
Source: authors

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The synthesis of 134 included studies reveals a governance landscape that is simultaneously dense and fragmented. Formal structures span the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee, a Multisectoral Team anchored by the Ministry of Agriculture with the Ministry of Health as co-chair, six cluster working groups, and multiple task teams that convene development partners and civil society, as shown in Figure 2 below. In practice, however, this architecture delivers uneven performance across five recurring domains: (i) policy formulation and implementation silos, (ii) symbolic coordination mechanisms, (iii) weak vertical integration, (iv) constrained participation and power dynamics, and (v) insufficient climate risk governance.

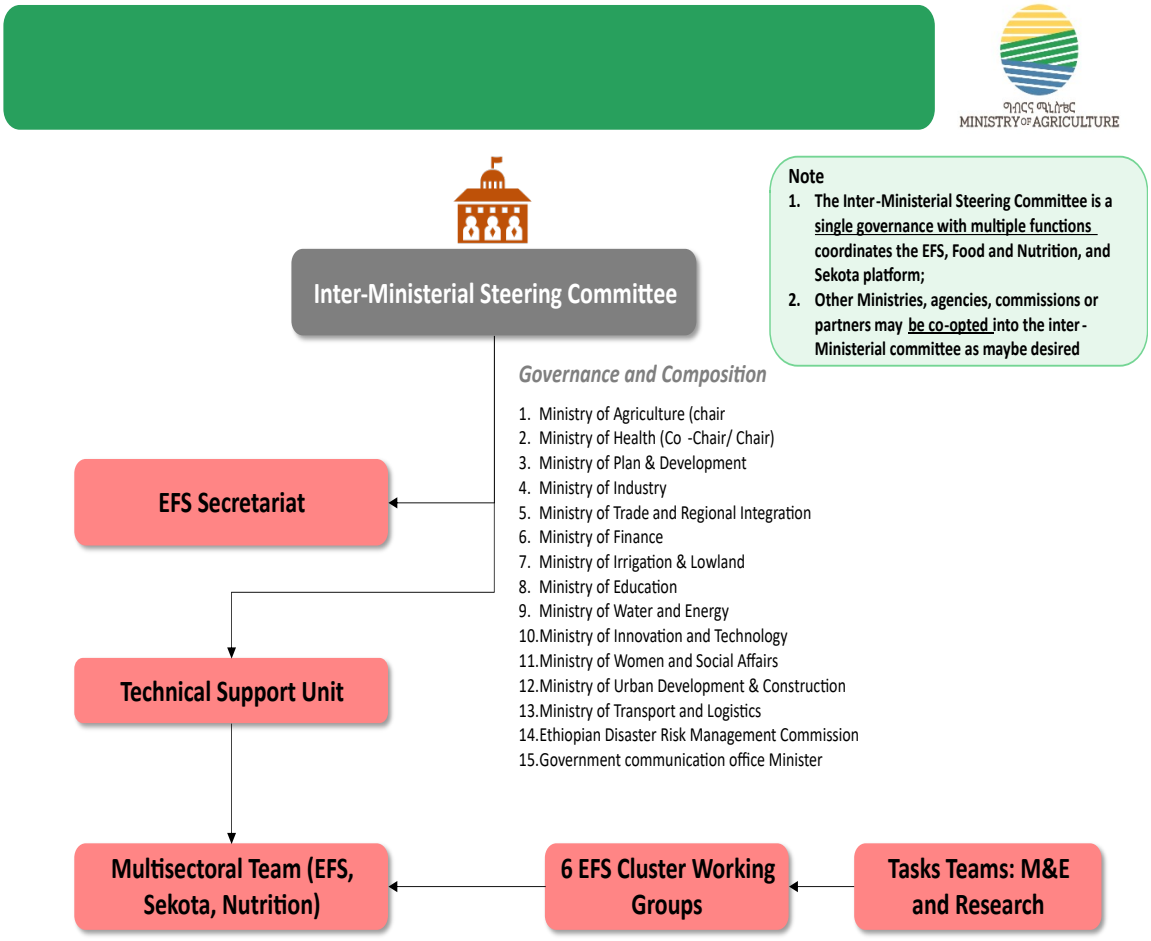


Figure 2: Endorsement of the Steering Committee Members and Support Structure
Source: Ethiopian Food System Synthesis Report, 2021

First, policy formulation and implementation remain siloed. Agricultural strategies prioritize productivity and market access; nutrition policies target dietary outcomes;

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environmental instruments emphasize conservation; and social protection addresses vulnerability. These streams rarely converge operationally, leading to duplication and gaps at the federal, regional, and woreda levels [17-20]. Where integration is attempted, objectives and indicators are not harmonized with the budget cycle, weakening incentives for cross-sector collaboration [21]. This fragmentation means that interventions often duplicate efforts or leave gaps unaddressed. Similar silo effects have been observed in Tanzania and Uganda, where agricultural and nutrition policies were poorly harmonized. The implication is that Ethiopia's food system transformation will remain constrained unless coherence instruments bind sectors to shared outcomes [22].

Second, coordination mechanisms often operate symbolically. Inter-ministerial platforms and technical working groups are well-documented, yet mandates and decision-making authority remain unclear, participation fluctuates with donor project cycles, and accountability is thin. Minutes and follow-up actions are inconsistently recorded; monitoring frameworks seldom attribute outcomes to joint decisions; and financial flows largely remain within sectoral envelopes [23-25]. These features generate a disconnect between high-level statements of multisectorality and day-to-day implementation realities. Symbolic platforms without clear mandates risk becoming "talk shops." Comparative studies in Ghana and Nigeria show that coordination bodies deliver results only when backed by enforceable accountability and budgetary authority [26]. Ethiopia's experience suggests that coordination must shift from meetings to money if incentives are to change.

Third, vertical integration is weak. Federal policies provide strategic direction, but regional bureaus and woreda offices face shortages of skilled personnel, constrained operational budgets, limited transport and digital infrastructure, and under-resourced monitoring systems. As a result, national priorities are not consistently adapted to agro-ecological and socio-economic contexts, and feedback loops from local implementation to federal policymaking are thin [27-29]. The consequence is geographic variability in execution quality and outcomes, particularly for nutrition-sensitive agriculture and climate adaptation [12, 13]. Weak local adaptation undermines national strategies, producing geographic variability in outcomes. Past decentralization studies in Malawi identified similar gaps, with local offices lacking the resources to contextualize national priorities [30]. This highlights the need for Ethiopia to invest in sub-national capacity as the fulcrum of implementation.

Fourth, participation and power dynamics constrain inclusion. Decision-making is dominated by technical and political elites, with smallholders, women, youth and civil society organizations more often consulted than empowered to influence agenda-setting or resource allocation. Evidence indicates that participatory

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processes frequently stop at information and consultation stages, with limited co-design or co-decision. Where women and youth have been meaningfully included, studies report improved contextual fit, higher adoption of sustainable practices and stronger accountability, yet such practices are not institutionalized and remain project-bounded [11, 31-36]. Exclusion of smallholders, women, and youth reduces policy relevance and adoption. Evidence from Kenya shows that institutionalized inclusion mechanisms have improved the uptake of sustainable practices [37]. Ethiopia's challenge is to move beyond consultation toward co-decision, embedding inclusive governance in routine procedures.

Fifth, climate risk governance is insufficiently embedded across sectors. While Ethiopia's Climate Resilient Green Economy strategy and climate-smart agriculture initiatives are widely referenced, adoption is slowed by financing barriers, limited extension capacity, weak integration of climate information services, and under-attention to gender and youth in adaptation planning [38-42]. Social protection programmes such as the Productive Safety Net Programme buffer against acute shocks but do not fully address structural drivers of vulnerability, including land degradation, market access, and social exclusion, without stronger links to livelihood diversification and local development planning. Ethiopia's climate strategies remain project-bounded, leaving households exposed to shocks. Rwanda's mainstreaming of climate services into district plans demonstrates that resilience gains require institutionalization [43] . The implication is that Ethiopia must integrate climate information and adaptive social protection into routine governance systems.

Notably, a minority of studies explicitly quantified the association between governance quality and household outcomes; nonetheless, convergent findings suggest that functional coordination and inclusive participation are associated with improved dietary diversity, resilience indicators and uptake of sustainable practices, whereas fragmented and exclusionary governance settings correlate with persistent food insecurity and vulnerability [13, 44, 45]. These patterns are consistent with comparative African experiences where decentralization, donor-driven platforms and multisectoral frameworks deliver results only when endowed with clear mandates, budgetary alignment and enforceable accountability [46, 47].

Taken together, the findings demonstrate that Ethiopia's constraint is not a lack of policy but a lack of governance functionality. The state has articulated progressive commitments across agriculture, nutrition, environment, and social protection; yet the translation into integrated, equitable, and climate-resilient action is diluted by structural fragmentation, symbolic coordination, and uneven sub-national capacity. These features mirror regional experiences in which formal multisectoral architectures underperform unless anchored in routine government systems, resourced through aligned budgets and measured through shared indicators [25, 46,

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48]. Theoretically, systems thinking posits that structural silos and weak feedback loops lead to policy interventions that are absorbed by the system without lasting change. The Ethiopian case displays precisely these dynamics: sectoral incentives dominate, learning cycles are shallow, and power asymmetries skew deliberation toward centrally defined technical solutions [11, 12].

Advancing policy coherence requires instruments that bind sectors to common outcomes. Inter-ministerial compacts with shared targets for agriculture–nutrition–climate–social protection, joint programme designs, and harmonized monitoring frameworks are pragmatic entry points. When coherence is integrated into public financial management through medium-term expenditure frameworks that require joint results chains, and through programme-based budgeting that spans ministries, coordination shifts from meetings to money, which is where incentives lie [25]. Ethiopia's existing platforms can be repurposed to convene these budgeting and performance dialogues on a quarterly rhythm tied to planning calendars.

Sub-national capacity constitutes the fulcrum of implementation. Investments are needed in competency-based training, staff retention, and supportive supervision for regional and woreda teams; in interoperable digital systems that link agriculture, health, and environmental data; and in flexible financing windows for local problem-solving and adaptive management. Strengthening linkages between agricultural and health extension services can operationalize nutrition-sensitive agriculture; collocating services and adopting shared supervision standards can increase efficiency and consistency.

Inclusion and power are central to effectiveness rather than ancillary. Legal provisions and operating procedures that guarantee representation of women, youth and civil society in coordination bodies, alongside gender-responsive budgeting and protected civic space, are associated with higher policy relevance and adoption [34, 36]. Recognizing and resourcing traditional and community institutions can increase legitimacy and create culturally anchored accountability, particularly where formal state reach is thin [29]. Climate-resilient governance must move from projects to systems. Integrating climate information services into routine extension, linking early warning triggers to adaptive social protection and local contingency planning, and deploying financial instruments that de-risk adoption for smallholders, such as weather-index insurance bundled with advisory and credit, can accelerate uptake [38]. Embedding resilience metrics in sector performance reviews encourages continuous adaptation. Without such institutionalization, climate initiatives remain pilots with limited spillover effects.

Finally, the evidence base should evolve toward designs that can attribute outcomes to governance reforms. Mixed-methods and quasi-experimental evaluations,

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participatory action research, and longitudinal designs can help test whether compacts, budgeting reforms, inclusive mechanisms, and climate-service integration yield measurable gains in household-level dietary diversity, food security, and resilience. Intersectional analyses foregrounding gender, youth, and indigeneity can illuminate how power and identity mediate the effects of reform [28].

IMPLICATIONS FOR ETHIOPIAN FOOD SYSTEMS GOVERNANCE POLICIES

Translating Ethiopia's ambitions into results requires a sequenced but mutually reinforcing package of governance reforms. First, institutionalize policy coherence by adopting inter-ministerial compacts that commit agriculture, health, environment and social protection to a limited set of shared, annually reviewed outcomes, underpinned by programme-based budgeting and harmonized indicators that connect productivity, nutrition, environmental sustainability and resilience [11]. This responsibility lies primarily with the Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Finance, working jointly with the Ministries of Agriculture, Health, Environment, and Social Protection to adopt and enforce inter-ministerial compacts. Second, shift coordination from symbolic to functional by issuing legal mandates that clarify decision authority for platforms, aligning meeting cycles with the budget calendar, publishing agendas, minutes and performance dashboards, and linking platform recommendations to appropriation notes and management letters [24]. The Prime Minister's Office and National Planning Commission should issue the legal mandates and oversee alignment of coordination platforms with budget cycles, ensuring accountability across ministries. Third, expand sub-national capacity through dedicated financing windows for woreda-level adaptive management, competency-based training and retention schemes, co-supervised agriculture–health extension, and interoperable digital systems for routine monitoring and feedback [28, 29]. Regional bureaus and woreda administrations, supported by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health, are responsible for implementing these measures, with financing windows managed by the Ministry of Finance. Fourth, embed inclusive governance by reserving seats for women and youth in coordination bodies, adopting gender-responsive budgeting across relevant sectors, and establishing protected channels for civil society monitoring and grievance redress; these measures should be paired with capacity support for community institutions to co-design and co-implement interventions[34, 36]. The Parliament and Ministry of Women and Social Affairs should establish legal provisions and gender-responsive budgeting, while civil society organizations and community institutions co-design and monitor interventions. Fifth, mainstream climate risk management by integrating climate information services into extension curricula, linking early warning thresholds to social protection scale-ups, and expanding de-risking instruments for climate-smart practices, with resilience indicators reported

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in quarterly sector reviews [38, 39]. Collectively, these actions turn existing structures into performance-oriented systems capable of delivering sustainable, equitable and shock-resilient outcomes. The National Meteorological Agency, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Disaster Risk Management offices should integrate climate information services into extension curricula and link early warning systems to adaptive social protection.

Collectively, these actions require coordinated leadership from Ethiopia's central government, with line ministries, regional bureaus, local administrations, and civil society actors each accountable for specific components. Anchoring responsibilities in institutions ensures that recommendations are actionable and evidence-based rather than aspirational.

LIMITATIONS OF THE REVIEW

This review has several limitations. Because this review restricted sources to English and accessible full texts, it risks omitting Amharic and other local-language documents, as well as internal government memoranda that may contain operational detail. The 2020–2025 window privileges recent governance arrangements and may under-represent the historical trajectories that shaped current architectures. Heterogeneity in designs, indicators and reporting styles precluded formal meta-analysis and limited cross-study comparability; grey literature, while policy-salient, varied in methodological transparency. Although we applied MMAT and an AACODS-informed checklist to appraise quality and used sensitivity judgment in synthesis, residual bias is possible. Finally, relatively few studies directly quantified household-level outcomes attributable to governance reforms, underscoring the need for more rigorous, mixed-methods and longitudinal evaluations in future work [25].

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Ethiopia's food system transformation depends not only on the existence of policies and strategies but also on governance systems that are coherent, inclusive, accountable, and capable of coordinating action across sectors and administrative levels. While the country has developed a range of frameworks to address food security, nutrition, environmental sustainability, and climate resilience, their effectiveness is often constrained by fragmented implementation, weak multisectoral coordination, limited sub-national capacity, and insufficient participation of women, youth, and civil society. Strengthening policy coherence, institutionalizing coordination mechanisms, empowering regional and local governance structures, and promoting meaningful stakeholder engagement are therefore essential for translating policy commitments into tangible food system outcomes. Furthermore, integrating climate resilience, sustainability, and equity objectives into governance

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processes will be critical for addressing emerging challenges and reducing vulnerabilities. When these governance conditions are in place, evidence suggests that improvements in dietary diversity, adoption of sustainable agricultural practices, resilience, and food security outcomes are more likely to be achieved and sustained; when they are absent, fragmentation, inequity, and vulnerability persist [31]. A whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, anchored in the reforms outlined herein, offers a credible pathway to translating national vision into equitable improvements in household food security, nutrition and livelihoods.

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DECLARATION STATEMENT

The authors declare that they have no potential competing interests in relation to the research, authorship, and publication of this article. No financial, institutional, or personal relationships exist that could have influenced the study design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, or reporting.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

KGA conceived the review, led analysis and drafting; ZZN contributed to synthesis, critical revisions, and final approval.

AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIALS

The bibliography of the 134 studies included in the PRISMA review is available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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